

United States Government

Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: June 11, 2003

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-103)

to: Ben Zelinsky
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager, KEWL-4

Proposed Action: Install Fish Screens to Protect ESA Listed Steelhead and Bull Trout in the Walla Walla Basin – Phase II Minor Diversion Screen Installations

Project No: 2001-039-00

Wildlife Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS): 1.15 Fish Passage Enhancement - Fishways

Location: Various Walla Walla River Basin Irrigation Diversions, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), the Walla Walla County Conservation District.

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to provide cost share for a program that will protect ESA-listed salmonid species in the Walla Walla River Basin through the installation of state and federally approved fish screen on over 300 water diversions in the Walla Walla River Basin. This program will involve a wide variety of projects including the installation of screens for both pump and gravity fed surface water diversions. This project will be implemented in conjunction with the Walla Walla County Conservation District, Columbia County Conservation District, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Walla Walla Community College, Washington Department of Ecology, and local irrigators.

ESA-listed steelhead and bull trout are presently at risk in the Walla Walla Basin as a result of a combination of factors that primarily involve insufficient flow, extensive habitat degradation, and mortality from surface water diversions. Unscreened or improperly screened diversions can damage fish scaling and induce stress, both of which can be lethal. They are also known to cause migration delays and increased predation; impinge fish against screen surfaces; or, in cases where screen mesh size is too large, allow juvenile fish to be drawn directly into functioning irrigation systems resulting in direct mortality. The goal of this project is to eliminate imminent mortality risks to ESA-listed fish arising from inadequate irrigation diversions in the Walla Walla Basin by upgrading screens to current state and federal juvenile fish screen standards.

This Supplement Analysis covers Phase II of this project, which includes minor diversion screen installations located in the Walla Walla River Basin in the state of Washington. Minor diversion screen installations are those projects that have been determined to have negligible, short-term impacts on listed species and/or critical habitat and can meet Best Management Practices, the

terms and conditions in the Biological Opinion issued by NOAA Fisheries September 25, 2002, and the terms and conditions identified in the Section 10 Recovery Permit issued by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on August 7, 2002.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Mike Pelissier with the Walla Walla County Conservation District (September 18, 2001) and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species that may occur in the general vicinity of the project area are steelhead and bull trout. Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, BPA submitted a Biological Assessment (BA) for the Walla Walla Phase II Screen Installation projects to NOAA Fisheries on April 12, 2002. As part of the BA, BPA determined that the proposed projects may adversely affect steelhead. BPA also determined that the proposed actions would have no adverse affect on Essential Fish Habitat for chinook or coho salmon. ESA consultation with USFWS for bull trout interactions were dealt with through the Section 10 Recovery Permit process.

NOAA Fisheries issued a Biological Opinion for the project on September 25, 2002 (see attached). NOAA Fisheries concluded that the proposed actions were not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of Middle Columbia River steelhead or result in the destruction or adverse modification of their habitat. Within the Biological Opinion, NOAA Fisheries identified a set of required terms and conditions that are designed to minimize take. USFWS issued a Section 10 Recovery Permit for the proposed actions on August 7, 2002 that also included a set of special terms and conditions. All identified terms and conditions must be implemented accordingly. Projects that cannot meet the terms and conditions in the Biological Opinion and the Section 10 Recovery Permit will require separate consultation under ESA.

There is the potential that cultural and/or historic resources may be affected by some of the proposed Phase II screen installations. National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 compliance will be handled on a project-by-project basis as sites and activities are identified. The Natural Resource Conservation Service has provided project proponents with a map delineating areas of cultural significance in the Walla Walla River Basin. Areas of cultural significance will be avoided to the extent practicable. In situations where cultural and/or historic resources will be affected, BPA will be notified and Section 106 consultation will be initiated with the Washington State Historic Preservation Office and appropriate Tribes and will be completed prior to construction. In the unlikely event that archaeological, historical, or cultural material is encountered during installation of projects under Phase II, a qualified archaeologist will be notified immediately and work halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed.

Standard water quality protection procedures and Best Management Practices will be followed during the implementation of all Phase II screen installation projects. Permits and authorizations will be obtained on a project-by-project basis as needed. No construction is authorized to begin until the proponent has obtained all applicable local, state, and federal permits and approvals.

This project represents a collaborative effort between WDFW, WA Department of Ecology, the Walla Walla County Conservation District, and landowners and private irrigation districts located throughout the Walla Walla Basin. The Walla Walla County Conservation District is a member of the Washington/Oregon Bi-State Technical Workgroup that includes WDFW, U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service, NMFS, WA Department of Ecology, the Columbia Conservation District, Confederated Tribes, the Walla Walla Watershed Council, OR Department of Fish and Wildlife, OR Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Water Resources Department, as well as local landowners and conservation groups. Notification of this project has been widely publicized within the Washington/Oregon Bi-State Technical Workgroup.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with Section 7.6A.2, 7.6B.3, & 7.8E.1, of the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. This Supplement Analysis finds 1) that the proposed actions are substantially consistent with the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265) and ROD, and, 2) that there are no new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed actions or their impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Shannon Stewart 6-11-03

Shannon C. Stewart
Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ Thomas McKinney

DATE: 6-11-03

Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

3 Attachments:

NEPA Compliance Checklist
NMFS Biological Opinion, September 25, 2002
USFWS Section 10 Recovery Permit, August 7, 2002

cc: (w/o attachments)
Mr. Dave Call - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife